

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

The courtesies extended to Applicants' representative by Examiner McCarry, Jr. at the interview held May 4, 2005, are appreciated. The reasons presented at the interview as warranting favorable action are incorporated into the remarks below and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

In the Office Action, claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,931,101 to Kaufhold et al. (Kaufhold). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed during the personal interview, Kaufhold is directed to a lightweight draft sill design. The relied upon embodiments refer to two separate and distinct draft sills. One (Fig. 13) is directed to a Type E draft sill while another (Fig. 14) is directed to a Type F draft sill. Each embodiment is only capable of receiving a single draft gear type. Additionally, each relies on distinct and incompatible draft gear mounting structures. Moreover, each draft sill in Kaufhold has a specific configuration that mates it to a certain truck bolster and railcar body. This type of highly individualized draft sill is the problem that Applicants' invention addresses and overcomes.

As discussed during the personal interview, the railroad industry has tailored cast draft sills to specialized and differing manufacture requirements and specifications. This has resulted in the need for a very large number of individual castings, each applicable to only a very specific type of draft gear, truck bolster and railcar body. See Applicants' specification at, for example paragraphs [0009] and [0010] where the Assignee alone supports 143 different combinations of cast draft sills. As discussed during the personal interview, this leads to warehousing problems and many inefficiencies from the standpoint of inventory management and production costs.

Applicants have developed a more standardized draft sill that can accommodate two vastly different draft gear types (Type E and Type F) and may include many additional standardization features that enable the draft sill to readily exchange draft gear types and to be fitted onto diverse railroad truck bolsters and railcar bodies.

For example, each of independent claims 1 and 17-20 recite specific combinations of accommodating features to achieve this functionality, including:

- a coupler opening...sized to accept both Type E and Type F draft gears and couplers;

- flange holes...in a pattern that accepts both Type E and Type F draft carrier bolt configurations;

- an integral spring basket...sized and shaped to receive a Type F spring-biased support assembly;

- a keyslot...capable of receiving a cross-key connection of a Type E draft gear and coupler;

- a mounting structure that accepts a standard vertical pin connection of a Type F draft gear and coupler; and

- a drop-in removable Type E coupler support that is removably fittable within the integral spring basket...for rigidly supporting a Type E draft gear and coupler.

Various claims further recite other standardization features that enable the common draft sill to adapt to mounting on two or more diverse railroad truck body bolsters or railroad car bodies. In particular, claim 7 adds that the side walls include both body bolster pads and body bolster wings (e.g., 82, 84 in Fig. 15). This allows the common draft sill to be mounted to two diverse truck body bolsters. Claim 9 adds that the top wall includes a precisely machined attachment surface that encompasses at least two discrete attachment areas to two different railroad car bodies (e.g., 210 in Fig. 14). Claim 12 adds that the main body of the

draft sill is sized to fit a center sill of a first configuration. Claims 13 and 17-20 further recite at least one weld-in plug (e.g., 206 in Figs. 17-20) that is mountable on the rear end face of the draft sill to adapt the draft sill to a center sill of a different railroad car configuration. All of these additional standardization features enable a single draft sill to accommodate mounting on a diverse number of railcar configurations.

As outlined in Applicants' paragraph [0017], this standardization enables a single common draft sill to be adaptable to up to about 80% of the current railroad market, whereas previously 143 separate and distinct draft sills were needed. This standardization has a significant impact on capital investment, reduced manufacturing costs, etc.

As agreed up during the personal interview, Kaufman fails to teach such features. Accordingly, claims 1-20 are not anticipated by Kaufhold. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The other art of record does not overcome the deficiencies of Kaufhold. For example, as discussed during the interview, Kozak arguably shows structure that allows conversion from an interlocking coupler to a non-interlocking coupler by addition of a welded conversion member 12 to a spring basket. However, as also discussed, minimal disclosure is provided in this 1955 reference. There also is no appreciation in Kozak of the vast differences in mounting of Type E and F draft gear and no showing of how such could be accommodated using a common draft sill (see Applicants' paragraph [0007] for a detailing of differences). A lack of commercialization of such a product despite the lapse of 50 years would tend to show that the disclosure is non-enabling or that industry believed that too many differences existed to make the conversion practical, even if it was envisioned.

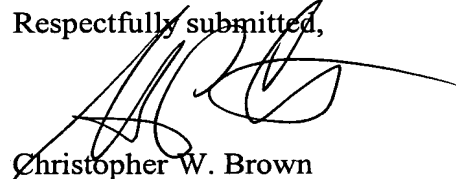
Kozak also fails to overcome the deficiencies of Kaufhold with respect to the other various standardization features recited in the claims. Accordingly, it is submitted that the

specific standardized features of claims 1-20 would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, in light of the teachings of Kozak.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Christopher W. Brown  
Registration No. 38,025

Stephen P. Catlin  
Registration No. 36,101

CWB:SPC/fpw

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**OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC**  
**P.O. Box 19928**  
**Alexandria, Virginia 22320**  
**Telephone: (703) 836-6400**

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